

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Upon entry of the above amendment, claims 1-33, 36-38, 41 and 43 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejections of all the claims pending in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

Initially, Applicant would like to express his appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided and for the indication of the allowability of claims 34, 35, 39, 40, 42 and 44.

Turning to the merits of the action, the Examiner has rejected claims 36, 37, 41 and 43 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by SHIBATA (U.S. Patent No. 6,825,955). The Examiner has rejected claims 28-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over SHIBATA (U.S. Patent No. 6,825,955) in view of ISHIBASHI (U.S. Patent No. 6,374,291).

As noted above, Applicant has canceled claims 1-33, 36-38, 41 and 43 without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection has been rendered moot.

Applicant respectfully notes that the cancellation of the claims has been made merely to advance the prosecution of the present application towards allowance and thus should not be taken as an acquiescence in the appropriateness of the rejections. Further, Applicant expressly reserves the right to submit claims of a corresponding scope in another application. Thus, the cancellation of the claims in the present application is without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicant notes the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Indication of Allowable Subject Matter. In this regard, the Examiner indicated that the claims are allowed for the reasons set forth in Applicant's remarks at page 12, lines 16-21. While Applicant does not disagree with the Examiner's indication and certainly does not disagree with the basis for patentability contained in his prior remarks, Applicant further points out that each of the claims in the present application defines a combination of features and a basis for patentability of each of the claims as based on a particular combination of features recited therein. Accordingly, the reasons for allowance should not be limited to those set forth in the identified portion of Applicant's remarks as there are additional independent bases for patentability for each of the claims pending herein.

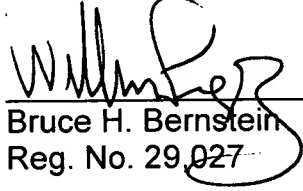
Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding objections and rejections, and requests an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application, in due course.

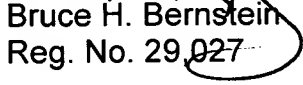
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicant has made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believes that he has now done so. Applicant has canceled the rejected claims without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, Applicant has provided a clear evidentiary basis supporting the patentability of all claims in the present application and respectfully requests an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application in due course.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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